

Charles Dickens and the Bible

Selected.

When Charles Dickens' youngest son was about to leave home and go to Australia, the great novelist wrote to him :

"I put a New Testament among your books for the same reasons, and with the very same hopes, that made me write an easy account of it for you when you were a little child—because it is the best book that ever was, or will be, known in the world, and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature can possibly be guided. As your brothers have gone away, one by one, I have written to each such words as I am now writing to you, and have entreated them all to guide themselves by this Book, putting aside the interpretations and inventions of man. . . . I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian religion as it came from Christ himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong, if you humbly and heartily respect it."

Habit

Selected.

Few have sufficient respect for habit—the ease with which it may be formed—the difficulty with which it can be broken—the magical power with which it smooths the rough path of duty, and enables us to look with indifference upon the allurements of the world. It is a kind of shield, which the fingers of a boy may, at first, weave of threads light as gossamer, and which yet grows into the strength of steel. By its aid the greatest things are accomplished. The cultivation of proper habits should be impressed on the young. Isolated acts are of little comparative importance. In short, a correct habit of living is principle, without which no one can be happy.

A Revival All the Year

Christian Endeavor World.

How may your society have a revival all the year thru, and your meetings be always attractive and helpful spiritually? Assign a generous portion of scripture to be read by your members each week, say a chapter, or more. Let it be read daily, accompanied by prayer for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit; then, when you come together in your meeting, let your testimonies center on the instruction and blessings thus received. There are two factors necessary to a good meeting—the Word and the Spirit of God; and this is the way to secure both. Try it.

All that you and I are responsible for is doing our duty. Ours is the seeding, and God alone beholds the end of what is sown. How do we know how much good we accomplish when we do any good thing or utter any truth in love? Eternity will be full of surprises to us. Wait and see.—Cuyler.

As we hold a candle to the flame until it is fully lighted, so we must hold ourselves to Christ and his word by meditation.—Bengel.

The Christian Life

"Thou Shalt Know Hereafter"

A message came but yesterday—
A message sorrow bringing;
Its echoes in my heart today
Like funeral bells are ringing.

I sit and read the message o'er,
As I before have scanned it;
Ah! so sorrowful it is,
I cannot understand it.

They come to me, my dear, sad friends;
They offer consolation;
And everyone suggests to me
Some new interpretation.

I do not their kind words disdain;
Kind hearts are welcome ever;
But shallow glosses know I well
Give consolation never.

For only He who sent the flood,
Whose waters have gone o'er me,
Can hold me up and help me thru,
And to my hope restore me.

One only can resolve for me
The doubts His deeds created;
He only set the bow that tells
The waters have abated.

And so in patience still I wait
In my lone habitation;
He dwelleth in the darkness, too;
I ask no explanation.

—W. Boyd Carpenter, D. D.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC

SELF DENIAL

- 1 Christ, our example in it, Matt. 4:8-10, 8:20; John 6:38.
 - 2 Is a proof of our consecration to Christ, Matt. 10:37, 38.
 - 3 It must be used in following Christ, Luke 14:27-33.
 - 4 It must be exercised towards, (a) Worldly lusts, Titus 2:12. (b) The appetite, Prov. 23:2. (c) Fleshly lusts, I Pet. 2:11. (d) Pleasing ourselves, Rom. 15:1-3. (e) Following the advice and wishes of relatives rather than Christ, Matt. 8:21, 22; Luke 14:26.
 - 5 Its result, II Pet. 1:4.
 - 6 Its reward, Rom. 8:13; Mk. 10:29, 30.
- (Adopted from Bible Text Book.)

Remarks

- 1 How selfish some people are!
- 2 Religion is largely self-denial.
- 3 Only as we learn to deny self do we become Christ-like.
- 4 Let us win the reward of self-denial.

J. L. GILLIN.

SPIRITUAL DEBILITY

MRS. MARGARET BOTTOME

Christian Advocate.

Strengthlessness, unable to do anything, "good for nothing," as we say. To take in that word "debility" is something terrible to me. What do we do in cases of physical debility? We say, "They must be built up;" change of climate, stimulants, everything is resorted to that is recommended. Now what are we to do in this condition of spiritual debility? And when a whole church is said to be in such a condition what shall we do? Never did the words, "building up yourselves on your most holy faith," have such a significance as when the word "debility" struck almost terror to me. There is no time to be lost.

The Church is made up of individuals, and now each one for himself. Am I in this

condition? If so, I will take the remedy at once. I will build myself up; I will go at once to the cross; all our healing, all our strength comes from His cross. It is because we have made the cross of Christ of none effect that we are in this condition of spiritual debility. "Back to the cross!" "Back to Calvary!" should be the watchword. "Our most holy faith" is that Christ died for us, and our healing is in the blood that He shed. We shall find forgiveness. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But we must lose no time.

Over against this awful word "debility" the Holy Spirit has brought to my mind the word "strength." He commands, "Be strong," and the lines of the old hymn came back:

"Strong in the strength that God supplies
Thru His eternal Son."

Strengthened with all might by His Spirit in the innerman! We may claim His strength, His life, His very blood to flow thru our spiritual being, and then the debility will give place to strength; then we shall have a spiritual appetite, we shall want to meet with those who love the same things we love, we shall want to read the same books that increase our appetite for anything that can help us in our spiritual life.

I was startled, just after I had read the words "spiritual debility," in opening a volume of sermons by Phillips Brooks, as my eye was arrested by the sentence, "God is so healthy"—holiness is health. Let us in our eagerness to be well and strong take in the truth of an indwelling God. O, do let us be thorough now and go to the roots; cease from our merely human efforts, take hold of His strength, be made over, be spiritually what we sometimes say of those who have gone down so low physically, "Why, you would not know him; he is another man." God grant that from this time it may be said of many of our Church, "They are new creatures!"

Begin To-day

Phillips Brooks.

Is there nothing which Christ, as your friend, your Lord, your Savior, wants you to do that you are leaving undone to day? Do you doubt one instant, with his high and deep love for your soul, that he wants you to pray? And do you pray? Do you doubt one instant that it is his will that you should honor and help and bless all men about you who are his brethren? Are you doing anything like that? Do you doubt one instant that his will is that you should make life serious and lofty? Do you one instant doubt that he wants you to be pure in deed and word and thought? And are you pure? Do you doubt one instant that his command is for you openly to own him and declare that you are his servants before all the world? And have you done it? These are the questions which make the whole matter clear. No, not in quiet lanes, nor in the bright temple courts, as once he spake, and not from blazing heavens as men sometimes seem to expect—not so does Christ speak to us. And yet he speaks! I know what he—there in all his glory—he, here in my heart